



LEFT: Leon Goossens helps Vincent Aspey (leader of the National Orchestra) and Vivien Dixon to tune up before a rehearsal

anxious to see on his return what sort of foal she had produced.

Leon Goossens is the younger brother of Eugene Goossens, the famous conductor of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra. He was born in Liverpool, but the family moved to London when he was 14. Both his father and grandfather, who were born in Belgium, became famous opera conductors in England, and his two sisters are professional harpists. Marie Goossens is harpist with the London Philharmonic Orchestra and the Covent Garden Opera Company, and Sidonie has been harpist with the BBC since 1923. A third brother, Adolphe, was also well known as a musician, but was killed in the First World War.

The Listener attended a rehearsal of Leon Goossens with the National Orchestra, when the members of the Orchestra had the privilege of tuning their instruments to his oboe. (The oboe is the instrument to which the strings of any orchestra normally adjust their pitch, hence the usual request by the leader before tuning of "Give us an 'A,' please, Mr. So-and-So." In the National Orchestra this task falls as a rule upon Norman Booth, the first oboist.) Mr. Goossens showed himself a meticulous artist, stopping the rehearsal frequently to ask for crescendos and other notations to be marked on the score to fit his conception of the work they were playing, a Vivaldi concerto.

His mastery of the oboe has inspired a new repertoire for this wind instrument, so often neglected by composers. Among those who have written works especially for him are Bliss, Bax, Gordon Jacobs, E. J. Moeran, Cyril Scott, Vaughan Williams, his brother Eugene Goossens, and Malcolm Arnold. Malcolm Arnold's Oboe Concerto was one of the works which Leon Goossens played with the National Orchestra while he was in New Zealand. He also recorded a programme with the Orchestra which will be broadcast in August. In this he plays Vivaldi's Concerto for Oboe and Strings and Volkmann's Concertino for Oboe and Orchestra.

"Give Us an A, Mr. Goossens!"

FOR SALE: Clarinet. Cheap! This sign in the window of a shop in South-East London attracted the attention of a friend of Leon Goossens, the world-famous oboe player, whose favourite instrument had been stolen from his car two years earlier after a concert. For the odd thing about the clarinet in the window was that it obviously wasn't a clarinet at all but an oboe, and it closely resembled the master oboist's lost instrument.

"My friend rang me up and told me about it," Leon Goossens said last week when he was being interviewed by *The Listener* in Wellington. "He said, 'It looks like your instrument, though it's called a clarinet.' So I sent down to the shop for it, saying I had a friend who was keen on learning the clarinet. I recognised it at once, and told the shopkeeper I was sorry, but he wouldn't be able to have his clarinet back."

"Is that the instrument you're playing on this tour?"

"Yes. It's the one I learnt on, my first oboe that I had given to me when I was ten years old. When it was stolen I had to have another one made for me, but I was never quite so happy on it as on this. You see, it's something you've had all your life, and not only is the intonation different, but the placing of the keys is different on any other instrument. To fit the fingering you have become accustomed to, the key placings must be exact to hundredths of an inch. If you changed to another oboe you would have to practise on it for months before daring to use it as a solo instrument."

"Of course I have four or five other instruments at home. I made a point of giving my daughters one each in case

they wanted to take it up, but the elder, Jennifer, who is 17, is now studying drama, and Corinne, who is 14, is still at school."

Mr. Goossens said that after leaving New Zealand he was going on to Perth and Singapore, where he would give concerts, and then back to England. He had three festivals to play at on his return—the Three Choirs Festival, the King's Lynn Festival (where he would play before the Queen Mother), and the Edinburgh Festival. After that he had two Promenade Concerts in London and one in Birmingham, and several television performances. He had also been asked by the BBC to give two lectures describing his tour of South-East Asia, Australia and New Zealand. It was the first time he had visited these countries.

He is a big, heavily-built man who wears a tweed suit and thick brown shoes, and he resembles a farmer rather than a man whose fame rests on his ability to produce a more ethereal note from the oboe than anyone else in the world. So it was no surprise to learn that when he is not appearing on the concert hall he spends his time on a 24-acre farm in Sussex, where he goes in for cropping in a small way, raising corn, oats, barley and wheat. He is also a keen horseman, and often rides to local hunt meet-

ings, where one of his fellow huntsmen is the BBC comedian of *Take It From Here*, Jimmy Edwards.

While he was in the Waikato to give a concert at Hamilton he took the opportunity of visiting the Alton Lodge Stud Farm, where he was greatly interested to inspect the stallions, fillies, and yearlings of the stud. He said that he does a little breeding himself, not of blood stock, but hunters. Before he left England he had sent one of his favourite mares, a Highlander and "a very lovely animal, a beautiful grey," to a local "premium stallion," and he was



★ Pianist from Switzerland ★

THE Hungarian-born Swiss pianist Bela Siki (left) opens his New Zealand tour next week. He will be heard in broadcast recitals from all YC stations on Wednesday and Saturday.

Described by *Paris Soir* as a pianist of "sincerity and technique, temperament and constructive will," Siki was once a pupil of Dohnanyi. During the war he was a soloist for Radio Hungary. In 1946 he was made a professor at the Budapest Conservatoire, and the following year travelled to Geneva to study under the famous Dinu Lipatti. He took first place at the 1948 International Competition of Executants. During numerous concert tours of Europe and Britain, Siki has appeared as soloist with such orchestras as the Tonhalle and the Winterthur, under the batons of outstanding conductors like Ansermet, Paul Sacher and Jean Fournet. His current tour of Australia and New Zealand results from his being heard at a performance in Switzerland by the ABC's Director of Music.

Three other guest artists of the NZBS will be giving performances next week. They are the tenor Andrew Gold, who has been singing at Auckland's Festival, his wife Pamela Woolmore, soprano, and the well-known Christchurch pianist Ernest Jenner. Gold will sing three Russian operatic arias with the National Orchestra at Christchurch on Thursday, and will be heard in duets with his wife from YC stations, on Friday and Sunday. Ernest Jenner's performance will be of Ireland's Concerto in E Flat Major with the National Orchestra at Christchurch on Saturday. The concerto will be part of a special half-concert to commemorate John Ireland's anniversary.

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